

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

APRIL 14, 2009

Existing homes and commercial buildings pose one of most significant challenges in achieving the goal of cutting greenhouse gas emissions. According to the U.S. Green Building Council, buildings account for 65% of electricity consumption and 30% of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States. By utilizing technically viable energy efficiency measures in existing buildings, energy consumption can be reduced as much as 20%.

In September 2008, the California Legislature passed AB 811, giving counties and cities authority to create benefit assessment districts which allow property owners to finance energy efficiency upgrades. Owners may enter a "loan" contract with a local government and pay it back through their property-tax bills. This legislation provides a valuable tool for cutting emissions by financing the material and labor costs of energy efficiency measures, such as solar panels, efficient air conditioning and ventilation systems, and tankless water heating equipment.

Such programs have been well received throughout California. Sonoma County received 181 applications within the first week of its program. The City of Palm Desert has the longest running program, providing loans for as little as \$5,000, with no upper limit, for energy-

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MOTION

MOLINA _____

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efficiency measures and installation of solar panels.

A Countywide Energy Efficiency and Renewables Financing Program will allow the Board of Supervisors to provide prudent financial incentives to encourage constituents to pursue energy efficiency upgrades. Such a program should be a cornerstone of a County program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions program.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS DIRECT the Chief Executive Officer, in coordination with the Treasurer-Tax Collector and the Energy and Environmental Policy Team, to report back on a monthly basis on its progress in establishing a Countywide Energy Efficiency and Renewables Financing Program. The report should include a schedule (with the explicit goal of utilizing Federal Energy Efficiency Block Grants or other Stimulus-related funding and having a program in place by July 2009), an assessment of financial viability, and an inventory of other appropriate funding sources.

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